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tendency to separate ethics sharply from its cognate branches of philosophy is a direct contradiction of that tendency to view life as an organic whole, which is the dominant note both in our scientific and in our moral consciousness to-day.

Members of ethical societies, moreover, must not forget that an agreement to do without agreement on ultimate questions, whether as regards the individual or the world in which he finds himself or the relation of the one to the other, cannot dis sever, in reality, the intimate connection of those ultimate questions with ethics, nor can they, of all people, refuse to face the fact that to relegate such questions to regions of mystery, or ignorance, is to leave themselves an open prey to the very class of superstitions from which they are most anxious to escape. As to the effect on conduct of philosophical views, there are some members of ethical societies who echo very heartily Professor Upton's words, that the most inspiring view of life is one which makes possible "the consciousness in the finite spirit of humble co-operation with the spirit of the whole," but who nevertheless doubt the inspiring effect of that doctrine *as a mere doctrine*. Only when we have "brought ourselves under a universal" in family life, under a "universal" in civic life, and have made ourselves respond with active sympathy to the real life of ever bigger and bigger "wholes," may we feel the unique inspiration of a "universal" which we can see expressing itself in history, and which we can understand as a vital aspect of the universal life, which is our life.

Ethical societies may be forgiven if they take these steps, whether in the education of thought, or in the education of feeling, one at a time. They can, however, but be grateful to those who remind them that all are steps along one way, and that there is no final resting-place on the journey on which they have started till they complete the circle, and work out for themselves a "perfect orb of truth."

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#### MORAL DISTINCTIONS.

Is it a fact that there is no distinction in ethics between theft or lying, on the one hand, and not living up to the highest ideal, on the other? Is a man who is not generous blameworthy in the same way as one who is not just? Have we as much moral right to find fault with a man for not giving up his leisure and comforts

to relieve a poor neighbor as with one who breaks his bargains? Mr. Muirhead would appear to say "Yes" to these questions.\* Mr. J. S. Mill would say "No."† I venture also to think that the ordinary sensible man of affairs (theological and supernatural ideas apart) would also say "No." Mr. Muirhead says that ethics deal with conduct and character, and that conduct is the whole of life. The ordinary man says or thinks, "When I have done my duty, then I may please myself how I act, and I am not bound to be philanthropic and self-sacrificing."

Another distinction which Mr. Muirhead appears to ignore is that between self-regarding and other-regarding conduct, between prudential and moral conduct. The ordinary man says or thinks, "Others may require me to do my duty towards my fellows, but they may not require me to be sober, cheerful, and patient. These things concern myself. I may be foolish not to practise these virtues, but I am not morally bound to do so."

Now, are these distinctions above adverted to real, or are they not? Is the area of moral obligation limited so as not to include either merely philanthropic, or merely prudential, conduct, or is it co-extensive with the whole of our conduct? It seems to me that these distinctions are essential, and the area is limited.

But if so, by what means do we determine whether conduct falls within or without this area of moral obligation? and why are we more morally bound in the case of the one class of actions than of the other?

The answer—shocking as it will be to many persons—seems to me to be that it is the mutuality of the rule which makes its observance morally obligatory, and which is one of the tests for deciding whether we are bound to observe it. When a rule is of great benefit to the community as a whole, then every member who benefits by its general observance, or hopes to do so, and who desires its continuance, feels himself morally bound to observe it also. There is a special feeling of obligation when a man knows others are observing such a rule towards him on the understanding that he does the like towards them. Of such a kind are rules against lying, theft, and breaking bargains, and in favor of bearing fair share of common tasks.

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\* "The Elements of Ethics," by J. H. Muirhead, University Extension Manuals. London: John Murray, 1892. Reviewed in October number, 1892.

† See Utilitarianism, chap. v., p. 73.

Rules of this kind have the following attributes:

1. They promote the common good.
2. They benefit each individual more than any loss he sustains in observing them.
3. They furnish him with an obvious answer to the question, "Why should I observe them?" "Because, if you do not, your fellows will not either, and you will lose as well as they."
4. Each man becomes interested in doing what he can to make his fellows observe them.
5. They are a common matter of agreement among all. All are interested in their acceptance and inculcation, all must openly profess to observe them.
6. They stand upon a feeling, deep in human nature, that it is good or wise not to injure one who is refraining from injuring us; they are part of the simple conception, "one good turn deserves another."
7. They appeal to the broader philanthropic and sympathetic spirit, as their observance is of the utmost importance to the general welfare of the community.
8. As a community cannot flourish or hardly exist without them in a more or less developed state, they tend to give rise to inherited tendencies in their favor by a process of natural selection.

Had Mr. Muirhead given due weight to the distinctions I have mentioned, he would not, I think, have made a statement so contrary to popular feeling and so, I venture to say, untrue as, that "an artisan or an artist, or a writer who does not do his best, is not only an inferior workman, but a bad man."\*

NEVILLE TEBBUTT.

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\* "Elements of Ethics," p. 45.